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ABSTRACT

Governments and change agents have assumed that people spontaneously would come forward and take part in development activities. But people have not come forward. It is now time that they be asked. Therefore, any project, program, or proposal involving a behavioral change should build in a mobilization strategy and resources for monitoring activities. Educational programs must not only teach people how to read and write; they must provide reading materials and reasons for using the skills of reading and writing. If a complete support system with real and understood incentives and rewards is not provided, people will soon lapse back into illiteracy and the change will have been unproductive. Active participation is necessary to make development efforts, whether political, economic, cultural or social, effective. Since social change is a collective process in the traditional societies, survival of core values cannot be threatened by proposed changes. Although government policy is the main instrument of mobilization and organizational structure the most important channel for effective mobilization, there is need for additional supportive activities by the mass media (radio, in particular). More thought must be given to the communication process and the role of the local community and its leaders if the individual's attitude toward change is to be altered. (NEC)

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MOBILIZATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Portugal-project
Document No. VII

Folke Dubell

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FOR DEVELOPMENT

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MOBILIZATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of this paper is to elaborate on the mobilization aspects of human resources for development. The bias is towards the rural areas of the developing countries but, hopefully, the discussion may be relevant to other situations, too.

The word "mobilization" has come into use in recent years among development workers and writers. It is a term borrowed from the military language and it has added new dimensions to development promotion and to the "development language", namely those of urgency and participation.
Many development workers are unhappy with the pace of the development process. It is too slow, they say, it will take ages before tangible results will be seen. They are probably right. It will take a long time until the impact of the development efforts on a large scale will be felt by the people in the depressed areas of the developing countries. Politicians in the Third World countries are getting nervous, they have raised the expectations of the poor people, they have promised the goods for more than a decade, since the Independence of the former colonies, and the people is anxiously waiting for the goods to be delivered. The look of things today is that the goods will not be delivered in the way they were promised. The development process has proved to be more complicated than what was expected in the 60s and early 70s. Many newly independent governments then asked their citizens to wait for a while until they had cleared the mess after the colonial masters, then things would charge...Development with capital D would come. Unfortunately, few governments have been able to live up to their promises and this fact has had a demoralizing effect on the population.

The introduction of the term "mobilization" should be seen in the context of revitalizing the development hope of the population at the same time as it indicates urgency in the development process and a greater participation by the people.

Although mobilization is a relatively new concept of social and economic development, it is not new as such as will be seen from the examples below.

Physical mobilization

The basic form of mobilization is the muscle power. Developing countries are very familiar with this type of mobilization. When, for example, a new road is to be built, the bush where the road is to go, is cleared by hand by hundreds, perhaps thousands of people. Their collective muscle power is mobilized. Today, bulldozers and other machines often do that type of job.

Normally we are used to the word mobilization in connection with a war situation. A nation may mobilize her soldiers in order to meet an expected assault by, for example, a belligerent neighbour. Or, as practically all mining countries have experienced, one day there might be a mine disaster. When such a situation occurs, it is too late to start planning a rescue operation. It must have been done long time ago, all the resources must have been taken stock of. Now, at the time of the disaster, they must be mobilized and put into operation. Forward planning and training for the expected emergency situation will be the best way of handling it.

Political mobilization

We have all noticed that when election day approaches, the politicians are getting more active. There are political debates on TV, there are radio programmes to which the voters can telephone and ask questions, answered directly by a prominent politician sitting in the radio studio, the leading articles in the newspapers are "politicized" and the ideological differences between the competing parties (in a multi-party system) is sharpened. All this is done to wake up "the silent majority" and to mobilize the voters to take part, to come foreward and cast their votes.

In a similar way, the developing countries, on their road to Independence, have had to wake up their silent majorities and to make them aware of the meaning of Independence, why they should be independent, how it could be achieved and the support they would need from the population.

On an international level, at the Bandung Conference in 1955, the Third World countries mobilized their political resources and presented themselves as a political entity. They demanded a role in international affairs.

In 1973, the oil producing countries mobilized their resources in order to face the industrialized countries in the west and to demand a higher price for their prime economic development resource - the oil.

Cultural and Social mobilization

Bozze Gregner and Rodney Aberg have in their book Varför är du fattig, Baba dji? (Why are you poor, Baba Dji?) (Stockholm 1979) an interview with a poor farmer in Pakistan:

- Why are you poor, Baba dji?
- There is no doubt that some people are happy because God has given them a lot. There is no doubt, it is the will of God that some people should be rich and some poor.

This is often how the poor man sees his situation. He thinks it is dictated by God, fate or some natural laws.

Another example of constraint of a cultural nature is, what Foster (1967) calls, the idea of the 'limited good'. From his work in the north of Mexico, he found that peasants' view of the world differed markedly from other categories of persons. He writes:

> "In Tzintzuntzan, and by extension other peasant communities, I believe that a great deal of behaviour can best be explained if it is viewed as a function of the assumption that almost all good things in life, material and otherwise, exist in limited and unexpandable quantities. If the most valued expressions of goods such as wealth, friendship, love, masculinity and power exist in finite, constant quantities, it logically follows that someone's improvement with respect to any of these forms can only be at the expense of others".

Norman Long (1977) commenting upon the above idea, writes:

> "... since more 'good' than already exists in aggregate cannot be produced, cooperation is seen as a fruitless activity. Hence security and safety within the village are best achieved by maintaining status quo, and by permitting no major changes in the traditional allocation of 'good'. Behaviour that is likely to upset these traditional allocations are viewed as threatening to the community at large...".

Cultural mobilization, a term borrowed from Denis Goulet, The Cruel Choice, (New York 1971), aims at making the poor people aware of the fact that their situation is man-made and that it can be changed by human arrangements. Paulo Freire's teachings in real life situations in North East Brasil have focused on the cultural mobilization of the oppressed.

In some areas in the developing countries, available health and school facilities are not fully utilized due to "irrational" taboos and to structural conditions in the family, in the organisation of work etc. Illiteracy is high, although facilities may be available to lower it. Living standards are below minimum, although land for cultivation is plentiful. These are but a few examples of activities that social mobilization tries to rectify.

Economic mobilization

The emphasis in the developing countries is on economic progress. The Governments there want to create opportunities for their citizens to increase their production, to grow more, to apply new technology, to operate business, to save and to invest money so that the Government can get resources to undertake reforms, to close the gaps between rich and poor etc. But in order to arrive at a situation favourable to economic progress, many governments in the developing world have to fight a wide range of cultural and social obstacles before such conditions are created that 'take off' is possible. The process of overcoming these obstacles is often long and painful, lined with social unrest and upheavals.

Definition and Aim

Before we proceed with our study of mobilization, I think it would be necessary at this stage to try to define it more clearly and to identify what it aims at.

At the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (Rome 1979) the conference made reference to mobilization when trying to define the objectives of rural development. It referred to the definition endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which states:

> "... The mobilization of the energies and resources of the rural poor themselves emerges as the key factor in increasing both their productivity and their self-reliance. Such mobilization requires the formation,

adaptation and strengthening of community structures, including organizations of the rural poor...".

Alexander Fraser Laidlaw, a writer on cooperative development problems, defines mobilization as a "purposeful and aggressive organization under a comprehensive but democratic plan". In his book Mobilization of Human Resources for Rural Development Through Agricultural Cooperatives (Rome 1975) he is referring to mobilization for cooperative development. He further says that "it implies an approach that is (a) active rather than passive, (b) much faster than in former days, and (c) involves as much assistance from official and external sources as may be thought necessary to meet the urgencies of the present time".

The two definitions have at least one common deromínator - and that is organization. They both recognize that, in order for efficient mobilization to take place, there is a need for an organizational structure. This is the 'permanent' aspect of mobilization. There is, however, also an ad hoc one. Francis Fox Piven and Richard A Cloward say in their book 'Poor People's Movements, Why They Succeed, How They Fail (New York 1977) that mobilization is 'temporary', people take part in an activity on a loose, ad hoc basis, e.g. to fight for welfare rights, to fight for or against nuclear power and the like. "Organization", on the other hand, means that people are affiliated on a more permanent basis to an organization, a movement, a party etc. The links between the organization and those organized are formal and the organization must be in a position to offer some incentives on a continous basis to those organized. If the incentives are remote, the organization will find it difficult to maintain its position.

Laidlaw's definition draws attention to another aspect that differentiates 'organization' from 'mobilization'. He talks about a 'democratic plan'. Mobilization, in its extreme forms, may not be democratic. Coercion and unconstitutional means may often be used, in particular in the western countries.

To sum up, it is my view that people should be mobilized through a network of democratic organizations, but, as Laidlaw says, the organizations must be "agressive", and the process "active" and "faster".

This is what many development workers and writers wish: to speed up the development process. The question of how this is to be achieved is still unanswered. One thing is sure, however, development cannot take place without

the active participation of the people on a collective basis, because development, in the context of the developing countries, has to be a collective process. It is the objective of mobilization to promote a collective development process on democratic grounds.

Decentralization for participation

Active participation is necessary in order to make the development efforts effective. Proper resource utilization will not take place unless the local people are involved in the various stages of the development activity. Hence there is a need for decentralization. Development is not only an activity for the people occupying the air-conditioned rooms of the capital. The rural people must not be looked upon as 'receivers' only. They must take part, contribute and be involved.

Active participation is different from the type of laissez-faire participation that is now being practised in many parts of the developing world. The time for laissez-faire participation has gone. Few development countries can afford it any longer. And this is where mobilization comes into the picture, it follows on where laissez-faire ends. It implies that participation in the development process on the part of the various target groups has to be secured and planned.

How will this be achieved without recourse to coercion and force? The answer lies in a wider approach to development, a modified mobilization strategy; planned change carried out by authoritative management teams supervised by democratic governing boards representing the target areas.

Mobilization strategy

Do poor people want to change their living conditions? Is that a relevant question? From 'our' (the development workers, change agents etc) point of view, the obvious answer must be 'yes'. And yet, our experience does not provide us with such clear positive answers. We have too many examples where the contrary seem to be the case. Or, have we misinterpreted the response of the poor? We have also in the previous pages noted how they have accepted their fate as the will of Good, Nature or some irrational 'law'. Can we really convince them that their situation is man made and that it can be changed by man? Can we reach them intellectually and can we get our message

across to them? Can they get their message across to us? Can we really make them understand and not just subserviently accept our advice?

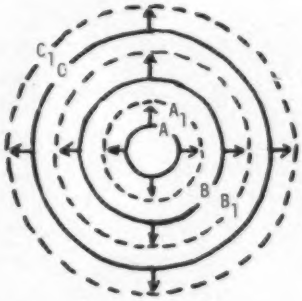
It might not be possible to give a straight answer to all these questions but, in general, I think it is possible to reach and to convince most people in the depressed areas. It is not change as such that scares them. They will accept change. But, as Denis Goulet (1971) has pointed out, it is the threat to their survival that scares them. And no wonder! Even in the wealthy countries in Europe with long traditions of Government handouts do people get scared when change forces itself onto them. Therefore, if the poor farmer is clinging on to his straw in the backward regions, we should not be surprised! We should try to facilitate his change process by making sure that his survival is not threatened by the changes we propose. This is very important. Perhaps the most important thing in the whole mobilization cum change process. It means that, before change is introduced, new and adequate support systems must be worked out on the basis of the requirements expressed by the local community. It is necessary to stress that it must be the requirements of the whole local community, and not only a few members of that community, as social change is, by and large, a collective process in the traditional societies.

Another important factor to consider is the philosophical outlook of the people, how they view their place in universe and what determines their existence. In an African context, for example, man is living in a universe surrounded by God. But man is not alone in that universe. He is living there in a visible world together with his neighbours, relatives, family etc. But there is also an invisible world! And this is as important to the rural African as his visible one! It is populated by the spirits, the spirits of his dead relatives up to 4-5 generations, his ancestors. The rural African must care for the spirits of his dead relatives and acestors. They are part and parcel of his universe, of his every-day life.
How will change effect them or, rather, how will change effect the rural African in his relations to his dead relatives? It is a question of importance to the rural African. It touches upon his core values and can, therefore, not be overlooked by a change agent. Similarly, many Africans mean that no man can exist by himself. He always exists in union with others, e.g. as man and wife, as a family, the extended family, the relatives, the dead relatives, the children to be born. These and many other factors influence his view of the world and his own place in it. They will, there-

fore, also effect his attitude towards change. He will view change proposals in relation to the effects they will have on his total existance. Therefore, mobilization strategies, to be successful, must go beyond the traditional approach that we have used now for a couple of decades with such meagre results.

To sum up so far, the important thing to remember is to work out support systems before change is introduced.

The strategy we choose will greatly influence the outcome of our change proposal. Let us consider one such strategy by introducing a figure, "the rings of values".



The idea is rather simple. We can say that the rings represent values held by an individual. Some values are of greater importance than others. The innermost, fundemental and basic values, are represented by the A-ring in the above figure. The next set of values, less firmly established, are represented by the B-ring, and the third group of values are the loose ones, i.e. the C-ring. We now come back to our strategy. If we initiate a project that will entail behavioural change, where do we start, what will our strategy be? Shall we approach the core values, the A-ring, straight away? No, we should not. We have previously said that a poor man does not respond to change, if that change threatens his survival. Core values are important to a man's survival. They are the nucleus of his very existance. In Africa, the extended family system belongs to the core value structure of most rural Africans. If a change agent proposes a project and a strategy that threatens the extended family system, the individuals of that system would resist the proposals, because their survival would be threatened, as they are dependent on the system as it looks today. What to do, then? The strat-

egy recommended in this paper is to begin with the loose values, the C-ring. The poor man is not dependent on these values, they do not threaten his survival and they can, therefore, be influenced. So, what we should try to do, theoretically, is to expand the C-ring, to move the C-values out to a new boundary that we can call C_1. The next set of values, the more firmly established ones, are to be treated in the same way. When they have been carefully identified, the process of expanding them should start, if no other conditions prevent it and if the target group has responded favourably to the first exercise of influencing the C-values. Finally, the core values are approached in the same manner. At this time, all threats to the poor man's survival must have been removed. The poor man will now, at least, theoretically, respond to the proposals of the change agent. Let us go back to our example of the African extended family system. We assume that a change agent, a government, for example, would take an action that in one stroke would brake up the extended family system. According to our previous discussion such an action would not succeed, as the people concerned would not respond favourably. But let us assume that the government will not listen to our arguments and, instead, pushes ahead with its plan. If such a plan should have a chance of success, before implementing it, the government should have made sure that alternative support systems to the extended family system were available, e.g. a national old-age pension, child allowance, unemployment insurance, health insurance etc. As all these support systems are now, to some degree, to be found in the extended family system. Let us take another example. Food production is often inadequate in the developing countries. Governments are urging the peasant farmers to produce more, to increase their production. But to a small farmer such requests do not make sense, because he knows too well what he and his family will be able to produce with their hands and hoes, without fertilizers, insecticides and other chemicals. He also knows that if he spends more time in the fields, he will get less time to spend on local activities, such as weddings, funerals, rituals, e.g. farming, planting, harvest and stock-keeping rituals, i.e. activities that give him some sort of <u>security</u> in his present every-day life and that belong to his core value structure. It would not make sense to him to change, unless there will be something to fill the gap. Again, what he needs are new support systems, so that he can expand his "value rings". In the above example, the support systems would have to include seasonal loans, fertilizers, transport, trained oxen and an oxplough, an adequate producer's price and marketing facilities so that he can sell his produce. If not, it will rotten in the fields or at his house or rats and insects will finish it.

Many farmers have been discouraged in this way, and as a result, they are worse off than before "the change", as they may be indepted to neighbours and others for labour, transport, use of equipment etc. above their normal repaying capacity.

It is the same thing if you teach a man how to read and write. You have got to provide him with reading material, books and newspapers. And not only that, you have also got to provide him with a reason to read and write, to use his skills. If you don't, he may soon lapse back into illiteracy again and 'the change' has been unproductive.

No 'change' will produce any permanent results unless the core values of a community have been taken into consideration and 'inefficient behaviour' replaced by attractive, community oriented support systems.

Incentives and Rewards

Mobilization of people always include some sort of an incentive. This may be, political, economic, social etc. in nature. The incentive must be real and understood by the people. For example, independence movements could rather easily obtain the support of people, because their incentive, Independence, was immediately understood in its narrower sense, i.e. end of exploitation, discrimination, racism, segregation etc. We can, however, now witness in many Third World countries how governments are trying to explain the broader meaning of Independence, e.g. continous hard work, self-reliance, and that Independence did not mean a short-cut to wealth and prosperity.

But this is really often how mobilization works. It does not give the whole explanation, it tries to set a process in motion by singling out some aspects of an issue, i.e. those aspects that are readily understood by a majority of the target groups. The point to remember is setting a process in motion, starting something, temporarily and at hoc. Once the process has got started, mobilization has been successful and a new phase follows on, a phase of stabilization and consolidation, in which education plays the most inportant role.

As it is only some aspects of an issue that are brought to light in the mobilization process, it is necessary to warn against propagators and manipulators, whose aims one is not sure of.

Incentives and rewards are important factors in the mobilization process. They determine to a large extent the success of the whole issue, because people respond or withhold their response to incentives and rewards. The rewards must be genuine and perceived as such by the target population. In many developing countries, in the early days of education, the rewards of primary school education was believed to be white collar jobs. They were perceived as real rewards. There was a clear correspondence between the family's expenses for having one or more children go to school and the rewards, in the form of employment with a regular income, from which the whole family benefitted. Today the situation is, unfortunately, different. Many young people, having finished their primary education, can no longer expect to find a job at all.

Another thing of practical importance to note is that the time period between the mobilization and the delivery of the reward must be as short as possible. People must be able to identify the reward as a result of their action. This is often a problem in developing countries because it implies that there is a strong management department to deliver the goods, which is, most often, far from the case. This has been noted, for example, among cooperatives. The Board of Directors, the policy body, takes decisions, perhaps in cooperation with government officials. The management, however, is unable to carry out the decisions for a long time due to a variety of reasons. If the time period between decision (mobilization) and execution (reward) is so long that the Board of Directors cannot see any reasonable correspondence, it will have a demoralizing effect on the policy body.

Unfortunately, we have also seen many times in developing countries how civil servants and other government officials have tried to mobilize people in rural areas by promising rewards, which they were not able to deliver. Such "mobilization" is detrimental to all development work and makes people completely loose confidence in the change agent and all that he represents. Great care should therefore be exercised in the recruitment and supervision of field or extension staff.

The Main Instruments of Mobilization

Governments are the prime movers of mobilization. No other body has the government's capacity to influence events. This is so because the government's monopoly on overall political matters.

The political system as such has a bearing on mobilization. In a democratic state, issues with important political ramifications are discussed and debated in the Parliament and, finally, a decision is taken. The decision may be supported by a weak or a strong majority of the MPs. The ideal situation is of course that a qualified majority supports the issues. But this may often not be the case in a multi-party system. However, the important thing is that a consensus has been reached. This will facilitate the mobilization process. In a non-democratic state, on the other hand, political issues are not treated in the same way, they are not discussed and debated publicly and decisions are not taken on the basis of the support of the Parliament. The non-democratic state has, however, some means at its disposal that the democratic state has not, which, initially, to some people, may appear as an advantage. The non-democratic state can command, direct and eventually force people to perform certain duties. However, this type of "mobilization" does not fall within our definition and is, therefore, of no further interest here.

Practically all governments undertake some planning today. The result is often a National Plan, which may vary greatly as to scope and detail. The idea is, of course, to give direction to the development process, i.e. to state the government's overall policies. The National Plan is often divided into sectors, e.g. agriculture, education, health, industry etc. For each sector, the government outlines its sector policy so that the relevant ministry and other implementing authorities may know where the priorities lie. That is how it should be. For our purpose, concerned with the mobilization of human resources, the important thing to note is that the government's policy is the basic and fundamental instrument of mobilization. It is, therefore, important that governments pay the greatest possible attention to the working out of the policies. Lack of policies will be detrimental to the mobilization process. Clear and elaborate policies will, on the other hand, facilitate the process. A number of governments in the developing countries have not fully realized the correspondence between policies and their importance in the mobilization process.

Although policies are basic and fundamental to the mobilization of people, they are not enough. Change agents must first of all have access to the target groups. Accessibility may in this sense imply physical acessibility - basic and fundamental in all development work. It is remarkable how quickly social and economic patterns change in a remote village, to which a road has been opened up. But accessibility may also mean the support of a farmers'

organization, a farm training institute, a rural bank, a clinic or a school. These are examples of development channels through which the adult education organizer or mobilizer (they are often the same person) could work. The more channels the better. Governments and other change agents need, therefore, to promote organizations of all kinds and in particular organizations that have been formed by the people themselves. Because it is through the organizations to which people feel affiliated that efficient mobilization may be channelled.

Any development work will have to include an awareness phase. If the awareness is not created, the channels will mean very little to the target groups. They might be there as physical objects, as buildings with certain forms, colours and shapes etc. But it is their integration into the local culture that should be facilitated by the awareness process. This process goes on for a certain period of time. In the ideal situation the awareness emanates from the local community itself. But in the majority of situations this is not the case. The local people may not know how to articulate their needs in a language understandable to the national bureaucrats. Development proposals, therefore, often come from outside the local community. Development agency staff have, however, to involve local people right from the beginning, at the planning stage and onwards. If, for example, a farm training institute is to be built in an area, local labour and other local services must be used. It is an entirely wrong approach to have a contractor bring in machines and labourers from outside to put up the buildings without involving the local farmers and their organisations. It is by employing the farmers and their sons and daughters that the community gets to know about the training institute and, as they have participated in building it themselves, there is nothing strange with it, it is accepted and slowly integrated into their daily lives.

Although government policy is the main instrument of mobilization and the organizational structure the most important channel for effective mobilization, there is a need for additional and supportive activities by, for exemple, the mass media like television, radio, newspapers etc. In many developing countries, newspapers and other written material is of little value as the illiteracy rate is high among the rural people. Television is normally not to be found in the rural areas and furthermore few people can afford it. Radio, on the other hand, is quite common nowadays in the rural areas and its potentials are not fully utilized. Many countries use exten-

sively radio for the purpose of mobilizing people. The results are not entirely positive. It seems as if people are not responding to a single message through, for example, the radio. A person in a traditional village does not take his own decisions independently. He or she is a member of a local community and it is this group or community, perhaps represented by the elders of a village, who decides what the individual shall do in a certain situation. When an individual expresses an opinion or takes a decision, it is in most cases the opinion or decision of the community and not necessarily that of the individual personally. This observation certainly has some implications for radio producers, educators, mobilization-and change agents. The western way of communicating with people does not appear to enhance the mobilization level in developing countries. For a message to be effective in a rural area of a developing country, it seems as if the message has to be group or community oriented in a total different way than the western style allows for. Face-to-face communication and peer-group activities are likely to become the springboard on which messages can move in order to open up the "safety valves" of the traditional communities. I have no other solution to offer but to recommend development workers, communication specialists, mobilization and change agents in the developing countries to give more thought to the communication process in their respective countries and specially to observe the role of the local community and its leaders for the individual's attitudes towards change.

Not only mass media are used when mobilizing people, although it is the most common method. There are, however, a number of other methods in use, in particular in the industrialized countries. These methods are not very common when great numbers of people are to be reached but more frequent when mobilizers are trying to reach special target groups. Lobbying, for example, is common in political circles, in particular in the USA, where pressure groups try to mobilize the support of politicians for their particular case. Protest movements spring up from time to time and they are using various pressure tactics in order to draw attention to their particular point of view. Mass rallies as well as demonstrations, strikes and sit-ins are other means by which people are mobilized in order to show their stand on a certain issue. But mobilization may also be carried out in a less spectacular form, e.g. by animateurs, house-to-house canvassing, the distribution of leaflets in the streets, the starting of pilot project, incentive systems, producer and consumer prices, salaries, land reform, fiscal policy, form credit, fertilizer distribution etc.

Governments and other change agents have assumed that people spontaneously would come forward and take part in development activities. They have concentrated on the projects and endeavoured to work out all the details in very elaborate manners. But people have not come forward. In the first place they have not done so because they have not been asked. It is now time to do so. We must request them. Therefore, any project, programme or proposal involving a behavioural change should have an in-built mobilization strategy and resources for monitoring the activities being carried out.

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